

### REMARKS

Before examination on the merits, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Preliminary Amendment. This application is a continuation application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(b) to claim cancelled subject-matter set forth in a co-pending US Application No. 09/214,306, filed 20 July 1999.

An abstract on a separate sheet is attached for insertion into the application. The abstract is identical to that published with PCT/NL97/00374 from which the instant application claims priority. Said claim for priority is specified in the amendment to the specification. The requested amendments to the specification include the addition priority information, subheadings for sections of the specification, and brief descriptions of the drawings. No new matter is presented.

The present claims are supported by the claims originally filed as well as by the entire application. No new matter has been added and entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

### CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that that claims directed to the present invention are enabled and limited to subject-matter disclosed in the above mentioned parent application. No new matter has been added to the parent specification.

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 313632000501. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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**EXHIBIT A.**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to a biodegradable hydrogel comprising bonds which are hydrolysable under physiological conditions. More particularly, the hydrogel consists of two interpenetrating polymer networks interconnected to one another through hydrolysable spacers. In addition, the invention relates to a method for the preparation of a hydrogel, wherein macromolecules, e.g., polymers which contain bonds which are hydrolysable under physiological conditions, are cross-linked in an aqueous solution.

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